

Thank you for the opportunity to address the community. I appreciate the work and care that all of you are committed to that shows in your attendance, attention, and presence tonight. These are long days – and this is of the most important work. This is the work of community, of courageous conversations, of justice, of education – and we cannot do it alone. I truly see the world in possibilities. Where some see a challenge or a problem, I see an opportunity to serve a need with care and loving attention.

My name is Kevin Marshall – and as a representative of the Franklin Pierce Education Association, I am here tonight to offer my care & commitment to the opportunities in front of us today.

I believe that we have the opportunity to partner in building collaborative models that are engaging, transparent, empowering, and provide access and agency to all of those in our communities. I see a community of talented, brilliant, and transformative humans that have the opportunity to learn to come together and teach each other how to truly create wellness for ourselves and one another.

This will not be easy... we have systems pushing on us that want to reproduce systemic harm... we have the work of learning to listen, of learning to decenter our own privileges and access, and to center those stakeholders that have been historically left out.

When I consider the daunting present day reality of returning to school amid a COVID outbreak that is beyond where we were last year at this time – I see an opportunity. I see an opportunity for FPEA to step up in partnership to collaborate in meaningful and powerful ways that show we are committed to working together in a unified front to hear and care for the valid fears, concerns, and anxieties of our members and of our community. I believe that through this partnership we can alleviate some of the compounding harm and trauma that we have all suffered over the

past two years. There is no experience that has us comfortable with the reality of today. We are returning to school, but we are not returning to normal.

One thing I know, is that I do not have all the answers - not one of us does, but I truly believe that as a community, we do.

How can we partner to center the safety of our students and staff?
How can we partner to open up clear and transparent communication and dialogue that we know brings safety and comfort to others? How can we partner to support the mental well being of those we serve? How can we decenter our own comfort as we seek to embody the pillars of our district: social justice & equity, improving instruction, and family and community partnerships?

I am coming to you to ask: How can we best be partners in service to move our work forward?